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BOARD BULLETIN

MINNESOTA BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK NEWSLETTER



COMPLIANCE TOOLKIT

The Compliance Toolkit is a regular feature of the Board Bulletin that will provide you with tools for handling common ethical dilemmas and issues related to the [Standards of Practice](#) found in the Minnesota Social Work Practice Act. Consider the following scenario:

I am a licensed social worker working as a case manager. My coworker, who is also licensed with the Board of Social Work, recently experienced the death of a close family member. My coworker initially took a few days off but has now returned to work. The coworker confided in me that they are not ready to be back at work but worries about their clients and coworkers if they take more time away. I have also noticed some unusual changes in the coworker's behavior including arriving late to work and outbursts of anger, and their case notes are difficult to understand. I am concerned about my coworker's practice and clients, but I don't want to get anyone in trouble. What can I do?

If you are concerned about a licensed social worker's chemical, mental, or physical health, you can contact the [Minnesota Health Professionals Services Program \(HPSP\)](#). HPSP was created in 1994 as a collaboration between the health-related licensing boards to protect the public. HPSP monitors individuals who may be unable to practice with reasonable skill and safety because of their illness, use of alcohol, drugs, chemicals, or any other materials, or because of any mental, physical, or psychological condition. HPSP is open to applicants or licensees of any of the health-related licensing boards, including the Board of Social Work.

Reporting Obligations: Licensing Board or HPSP

[Minnesota Statutes section 148E.240, subdivision 3](#), requires licensed social workers to report other licensed health professionals, including other licensed social workers, to the appropriate board if they have knowledge the other licensed health professional may have violated their practice act.

As an alternative, if you have knowledge that someone who is licensed by the Board of Social Work or other licensing board may be unable to practice safely due to an illness, chemical use, or their mental health, you can report that person to HPSP instead of their licensing board. ([Minn. Stat. sec. 214.33, subd. 1](#)) HPSP will then contact the licensee and determine if monitoring with HPSP is appropriate. If the licensee complies with the requirements of HPSP, the person is not reported to the Board and can participate in HPSP without the Board having any knowledge of their participation.

Self-Reporting

Individuals who are struggling with an illness are also able to self-report to HPSP. HPSP will conduct an intake process to determine whether the person is eligible and has an illness that warrants monitoring. Individuals who are unable to practice due to an illness are required to report themselves either to their Board or to HPSP. ([Minn. Stat. sec. 148E.205, subd. 2](#))

HPSP exists to protect the public and works to promote early intervention, diagnosis and treatment for health professionals with illnesses, and to provide monitoring services as an alternative to Board discipline. If you are concerned about yourself, a colleague, employee, or family member, you can contact HPSP at 651-642-0487 to learn more about the program.